Deputation of officials for IOTC

2880. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are deputing some officials to work on a permanent basis at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission;

(b) if so, the details of other tie-ups with IOTC and Government.

(c) to what extent Government have re-assessed the need for Indians to have any role in the IOTC.

(d) whether Government will welcome suggestions on this matter; and

(e) the steps proposed to protect our maritime interests from seasoned maritime countries with huge fleets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Government has not deputed any officials to work on a permanent basis at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). India is participating in IOTC Scientific Session and Main Session which are annual events.

(c) Besides the annual meetings of IOTC mentioned above, officials as well as scientists from India also participate in the Working Party Meetings of IOTC on various tuna species and other highly migratory and straddling fish with a view to conserve and manage these resources. Technical support has also been availed to strengthen data collection and data processing system for tuna resources. Our scientists have also participated in the tuna tagging programme with financial assistance from IOTC.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The objective of IOTC is to promote co-operation among its Members with a view to ensure through appropriate management, conservation and optimum utilization of such stocks covered by IOTC for sustainable development of these resources. Since these species are highly migratory and straddling in nature, moving between Exclusive Economic Zones of different countries and the high seas, cooperative efforts are essential. Our active participation in IOTC events helps in the management and conservation of these resources. Simultaneously, the country is also augmenting its fleet of resource specific deep sea fishing vessels by Indian Companies.